Road-bridge over Brahmaputra

745. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to construct a road-bridge over Brahmaputra river in Assam to connect Sadiya with other parts of Assam considering its importance being a border town with sub-divisional headquarter of Assam Government;

(b) whether the proposed construction of road-bridge over Brahmaputra river adjacent to Saraighat bridge at Guwahati would be completed on time; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The work is targeted for completion by April 2010.

Ban on diesel cars in capital

746. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government has taken necessary action on the recommendations of the Environment Pollution Control Authority to ban diesel cars in the capital;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons behind it; and

(c) the details of reaction of public in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Government has no mandate to ban motor vehicles plying on any specific fuel.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of answer to (a) above.

UFO hitting Romanian Jet Plane

747. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a UFO hit Romanian Jet Plane some time back and UFOs have also been sighted;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any research or scientific study has been carried out by our scientists in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) does not have any information either on a UFO hitting a Romanian Jet Plane, or on sighting of UFOs.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) There is no reliable data to support the existence of UFO.

Projects running behind schedule

748. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Government projects are running behind schedule;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether due to untimely completion of such projects, there is cost escalation of such projects;

(d) if so, the facts thereof; and

(e) the reasons for such projects that could not be completed in time and the effective steps taken to complete such projects at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G. K. VASAN): (a) and (b) As on March 2008, out of 909 projects costing Rs.20 crores and above on the monitor of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 346 projects are running behind schedule with respect to the latest approved schedule.

(c) and (d) Delays in the implementation of projects is one of the reasons for cost escalation. Cost overrun in 346 delayed projects is Rs.24,689 crores which is 13.33 per cent of the latest approved cost of Rs.1,85,089 crore. Besides delay in projects, cost escalation is also due to changes in scope, under estimation of original costs, change in foreign exchange rates, high cost of environmental safeguards, high cost of land acquisition & rehabilitation, general price rise etc.

(e) The reasons for the projects running behind schedule include: funds constraints, delay in land acquisition, delay in supply of equipment, law and order problems, and geographical surprises during implementation.

The effective steps taken by the Government to complete such projects at the earliest *inter-alia* include:

(i) adoption of two-stage clearance system and stricter appraisal of projects before investment approval;

(ii) taking up of projects for implementation only after funds have been fully tied up;

(iii) in-depth review of projects on monthly and quarterly basis by the Government;

(iv) follow up with the State Governments in respect of problems relating to land acquisition, rehabilitation related issues, forest clearances, infrastructure facilities, ensuring law and order at project sites, etc.